



course, include his best-loved character – the brash-wedding bandmate, deferring his skills, popularity and contribution to British life, Giles received the BBC in 1999 and died in 2004 at the age of 79.

Giles collector Steve Adams believes the appeal of the cartoons works across worlds. “They are a document of social history showing customs and relating that our elderly members from one’s youth – young nostalgia. They are also so well observed and drawn. Often there are very large numbers of faces in a single cartoon and you can see that each one really an individual, not just background fluffers and everything else really works. The man was obviously a scholar for ‘if he’s going to do it, then he’s going to do it well’. And then there is the Giles family. I think the success here is that they demonstrate the traits that are there

- to gender or lesser extent - to everybody’s relation.”

Steve first became aware of Giles during school holidays spent with his grandmother and uncle: “They were English readers and my uncle had some of the very earliest annuals. I must have read all of them on every visit.” But it wasn’t



*Giles Annual 2012, available from Amazon.*

until about 10 years ago that he started collecting seriously. “I now have a full set – although some are hard to find published in the last seven years – and a number of special issues, such as ‘War!’ and ‘Giles on Children’ plus other books which contain a few of his cartoons.”

Steve’s collection also includes such items as the catalogue for the Giles exhibition to celebrate the 50th anniversary of Britain’s liberation and various books and articles about the cartoonist himself. “There aren’t

the odd ‘gigue poster’ to add. “Of course, there are still lots of things that I would like if my purse allowed”



*Assorted Giles memorabilia featuring charity Christmas cards (R.N.I.I.), calendars, gigue posters and a story table top.*

Collector Ian Wright’s interest was also inspired early on, his father always treated the Giles annual as a Christmas present each year. “In times as we experienced it, we wouldn’t have anything from him until he had finished reading it. Then as I got older, as soon as he had finished, I would always be the next to read it.” How far himself has gone a few



*Giles Annual No.25, 1993-94. Price: £7.99*

years, calendars, series, Christmas cards and figures. “My father has all the annuals, two complete sets of them, I believe – one set for collecting and one to read.”

For Ian, Giles’ special appeal is the way in which the cartoons focused on the events being described but always managed to provide its touch of wit in the background. “I never get tired of looking at the cartoons because there is always something about to see” he insists. “There are just an inherent need to when they were done.”

Although there are many Giles enthusiasts, no collector’s club appears to exist (although Steve Adams does currently e-mail a newsletter but is open to people). As a result, enthusiasts have to spread their nets wide to find Giles material. In his experience, Giles books turn up all over the place and now come frequently on the internet auction sites’ says Ian. “I’ve found annuals and figures at car boots, jumble sales, bookshops and even the internet.” A couple of years ago, a friend even bought two 17 annuals from a charity shop.

According to Steve Adams, however, the situation is changing. “Most of my early collection came from car boot sales and charity shops. Until about five years ago, they were everywhere and I was paying about 15p or 25p. Now you’re more likely to have to go to second-hand bookshops and pay between £3 and £5 for books from about 20p to upwards. Earlier ones are, naturally, more expensive and condition is all important. Good copies of series 1 or 2 can fetch up to £200.”



*Small edition bronze effort statue of Giles’ Grandma. Price: £150 onwards.*

Real specials, with Steve, like the ‘US Series Special’ or the ‘England Series’, can now sell for around £2000. “England Series” is the third Giles ‘special’, produced and printed in Denmark in 1948, the year after the first annual came out in England,” he explains. “It uses the same front cover as the Giles No. 1, but contains about half the cartoons, with each facing the caption line in Danish and English. ‘US Series Special’ was produced some time in the late 1950s prior to 60 cents and has a collection of some of the cartoons featuring US servicemen in England.” 200-



**Giles Annual 2004, 2004 Giles Book Co.**

Original cartoons also often double over £5,000 a time, turning up at such places as the Chris Barber's hall or auction houses like Christie's. As Giles produced so many cartoons, the price might seem rather high. Steve believes that this is because Giles never sold any originals. "He gave quite a number away to people who asked for particular examples and a few more as presents to people in Fleet Street and local pubs, etc. All the rest are held by the Giles Trustees. In addition, there are quite a few around that appeared on hand-drawn cards for family friends and acquaintances as well as a number drawn specially for events such as local boxing tournaments."



**Giles Annual 2001, 2001 Giles Book Co.**

Apart from these much sought after originals, other items are also getting difficult to find. Ian explains memorabilia such as sets of tablemats and the older calendars - especially those Giles did for Guinness. "I never see them for sale" he remarks. Other Giles illustrated pamphlets and books and the one-off special annuals are also hard to get hold of. By contrast, the annuals seem the easiest items to track down but are getting scarce by the year, especially the early ones.

David Davies, who's been collecting Giles for 25 years, confirms that finding the rare items can take quite a while. "I only completed my

book collection last year with a super-still to lay on the wire with some friends" she explains. "The Giles file, a annual book we spent to get." A Giles collector since the age of 10, Carol particularly appreciates his skills because she herself is now an illustrator. "It's the first cartooned I admired. I used to do the Snowball (figure over and over) just to see the detail in it. So maybe he inspired me to become an artist."



**Giles Annual 2002, 2002 Giles Book Co.**

Carol admits that she is still hunting for such things as 80 promotional memorabilia and glass mats which were in the back of a Giles annual some years back. "I didn't have enough money to get them at the time" she adds regretfully. "But I do now have over 100 books and lots of calendars, diaries, Christmas cards and several cartoon figures which I think are my favourite items. Over the years, I have met friends through work and over the internet who also collect Giles and other cartoons which I like."



**Giles Annual 2005, 2005 Giles Book Co.**

# GILES

A COLLECTION



Giles collector about the job: James Baker says

dealer Jim Alliman, who specialises in general cartoon books and annuals, says that Giles is the most popular of all the cartoonists' work that he stocks. "There was a flurry of early interest immediately after his death," he explains "but now it's settled down again with a steady demand for chronically original early annuals. One of the things that has changed over the last few years is that demand for poorer condition early annuals (Nos. 1 to 5) has become less as fanzine-copies of them have been produced. Collectors will 'make do' with a facsimile rather than get a really original."

Jim confirms that the early Giles annuals are still the most sought after. "Prices for really nice copies can be high. However, as wear becomes more obvious – creases, splits to the spine, etc. – the value drops very rapidly. Therefore, one in 10-condition would be worth between three

and five," he says. Jim says, "In people often have false expectations about the value of the books they want to sell. The chances of annuals in poor condition will expect to be offered a high price for them even though few collectors would buy them.

Almost all the customers for Giles material live in the UK, those based abroad are almost always ex-pats. But, unlike Steve Adams, his specialist is read by people around the

world. "I would have sworn that Giles was dead in

English as humour can get for these people is different," notes Dave. "Giles was even adopted by the US Association of Bookmen (people who specialise in rare lying stuff) as their official cartoonist!" ■



## Collect it! Fact File

■ The Collector's Guild has a selection of Giles Family Equines with prices ranging from £12.50 to £29.95. Write to them at The Mills, Woodmill Lane, Woodpe, Suffolk IP50 8BN. Tel: 01288 244 482. Website: [www.thecollectorsguild.com](http://www.thecollectorsguild.com)

■ The Cartoon Art Trust is based at River House, 81-88 Hatton Garden, London EC1M 6LX. Annual UK membership costs £15 (or £20 for two people at the same address).

■ Jim Alliman has produced the only existing bibliography of Giles material for sale in all cartoon books, collectible children's books and annuals. Contact him at Paper Books, 81 Bennett Road, Brynemouth, Somerset BA9 8BN. Tel: 01280 288995. E-mail: [jim@jimalliman.freemove.co.uk](mailto:jim@jimalliman.freemove.co.uk) Website: [www.jimalliman.co.uk](http://www.jimalliman.co.uk)

■ Giles (in price) are available from Sgt. Paul Cooper, Police Station, Suffolk Constabulary, Redgrave Street, Bury St Edmunds, Suffolk IP21 1LN. Website: [www.mopad.org.uk/Shop/Shop.htm](http://www.mopad.org.uk/Shop/Shop.htm). Ten Giles price characters are featured and prices start from £1.95, with profits going to charities.

■ Steve Adams, 14 Thornburn Road, Bishop's Cleeve, Northwich, Cheshire (WA9) 6AL. Fax/Email: 0870 132 7088. Website: [www.giles-childrens.com](http://www.giles-childrens.com)

■ Ian Knight can be contacted via his website at [www.giles-cartoons.co.uk](http://www.giles-cartoons.co.uk)

■ Carol Davies can be contacted through the Collect It office.

### Further Reading

■ 'Giles & Life in Cartoon' by Peter Tony Headline, 1992. (second hand), a hardback copy costs about £25 (ISBN 0 7472 0472 0) and the paperback version about £15 (ISBN 0 7472 1999 5).

■ 'The Ultimate Giles' by Peter Tony Headline, 1995. (ISBN 0 7472 7092 8). Price second-hand is around £6.45.

■ 'Carl Giles - 50 Years of the Daily Express' (Cartoon Art Trust, 1982).

■ 'The Giles Family' by Peter Tony Headline, 1993. (ISBN 0 7472 0880 0 (hardback) or 0 7472 1997 4 (paperback).

■ 'Giles at War' by Peter Tony Headline, 1994. (ISBN 0 7472 1947 1 (hardback) or 0 7472 1998 0 (paperback).

■ 'Giles: 50 Years at Work' (British Council, 1994. ISBN 0 9633 1455X).

■ 'Gardens' by Robert Beaumont (Headline, 1999. ISBN 0 7472 1487X (hardback) or 0 7472 19979 (paperback). Price £18.95.